

lg8 *On the Aversion of Men of
Taste*

wished that Christian sentiments might assume a language as impressive as any subject had ever employed to fascinate or command. But unfortunately they forgot that eloquence resides essentially in the thought, and that no words can make genuine eloquence of that which would not be such in the plainest that could fully express the sense. Or probably they were quite confident of the excellence of the thoughts that were demanding to be so finely sounded forth. Perhaps they concluded them to be vigorous and sublime from the very circumstance, that they disdained to show themselves in plain language. The writers would be but little inclined to suspect of poverty or feebleness the thoughts which seemed so naturally to be assuming, in their minds and on their page, such a magnificent style. A gaudy verbosity is always eloquence in the opinion of him that writes it; but what is the effect on the reader? * Real eloquence strikes with immediate force, and leaves not the possibility of asking or thinking whether it *be* eloquence; but the sounding sentences of these writers leave you cool enough to examine with doubtful curiosity a language that seems threatening to move or astonish you, without actually doing so. It is something like the case of a false alarm of thunder; where a sober man, who is not apt to startle at sounds, looks out to see whether it be not the rumbling of a cart. Very much at your ease, you contrast the pomp of the expression with the quality of the thoughts; and then read on for amusement, or cease to read from disgust. In a serious hour, indeed, the feelings both of amusement and disgust give place to the regret, that it should be in the power of bad writing to bring the most important subjects in danger of something worse than failing to interest. The unpleasing effect it has on your own mind will lead you to apprehend its having a very injurious one on many others.

A principal device in the fabrication of this style, is, to multiply epithets, dry epithets, laid on the surface, and into which no vitality of the sentiment is found to circulate. You may take a number of the words out of each page, and

* I should be accurate, and say, the reader of disciplined judgment and good taste; for it is true enough that the readers are not wanting, nor few, who can be taken with glare and bombast.